

Verification and Blind Verification

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Verification and Blind Verification

1 INTRODUCTION

- A. Verification is the application of Analysis, Comparison, and Evaluation to a friction ridge print(s) by another examiner.
- B. Blind verification is a type of verification by another examiner who has limited case information and does not know the evaluation decision of the primary examiner.
- C. Blind verification is used as a means to reduce confirmation bias and limit contextual bias in the examination process.

2 SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS

These procedures apply to all appropriate personnel who are involved in conducting verifications or blind verifications.

2.1 Verification

- A. Verifications must be performed on all identifications; however, other evaluation decisions may be verified.
- B. Verifications cannot be performed by an examiner who has consulted on the print(s) to be verified.

2.2 Blind Verification

- A. A blind verification must be performed in cases with a single evaluation decision with the exception of the circumstances listed in [Section 7](#) and [Section 8](#).
- B. In addition, a blind verification will be performed when a print(s) being reported as an identification(s) has required resolution of a technical disagreement, unless a Scientific Review Board was used or a conclusion of known inconclusive was changed to identification following a verification.
- C. Blind verifications cannot be performed by an examiner who:
 - o has consulted on the print(s) to be blind verified,
 - o has knowledge of the evaluation conclusion(s), or
 - o has detailed case information.

3 PROCEDURE

- A. When required, verification or blind verification must be completed prior to providing those results to the contributor.
- B. If a blind verification is conducted, a separate verification is not required.
- C. A supervisor may determine that a print(s) not meeting those requirements in [Section 2](#) will be verified and/or blind verified as the case or examination dictates.
- D. If there is a difference of conclusion (either analysis or evaluation), see [Section 9](#).

3.1 Coordinator

- A. The role of coordinator is performed by a supervisor.

- B. In immediate cases or other situations established by management, all or some of the administrative functions may be performed by an individual in a non-supervisor role.
1. Permissions and limitations will be established by management in writing.

4 VERIFICATION

- A. The primary examiner will provide:
- The examiner's evaluation(s).
 - Unmarked image(s) of the print(s) to be verified.
 - Any other image(s) relied upon to arrive at the examiner's Analysis, Comparison, and Evaluation conclusion(s) (e.g., image(s) of the same print developed in a different development medium).
 - All associated known exemplar(s) used by the primary examiner to support the examiner's evaluation conclusion.
- B. The coordinator selects the verifier and ensures the applicable verification materials are provided.
1. The coordinator may be asked to provide additional information concerning the print (such as evidence type) or coordinate the transfer of a digital image(s).
 2. The appropriate Unit Chief ensures that verifiers are chosen on a rotational basis.
- C. The verifier receives the verification materials and:
- Ensures that he/she is eligible to perform a verification as described in [Section 2](#).
 - Conducts and records an Analysis, Comparison, and Evaluation examination of the print(s) submitted for verification following the procedures in *Examining Friction Ridge Prints* ([FRD-500](#)).
 - May search the Next Generation Identification System.
 - If an Identification is not effected as a result of an automated search, the examiner's final decision must be based on manual comparison(s) with the provided record(s).
 - May request a digital copy of the original and/or digitally processed image(s) from the coordinator.
 - May consult with another examiner.
 - This consultation must be recorded in the FBI Laboratory file.
- D. The verifier records the following:
- All appropriate markings on the provided unmarked image(s) of the print(s) to include:
 - The information used to reach the conclusion(s) as described in [FRD-500](#).
 - The analysis and evaluation decision(s) reached.
 - If the print is determined to be not suitable for comparison, the verifier must record that the verification was completed and the conclusion reached was not suitable for comparison.

- For intentionally recorded non-standard prints that are verified as part of a records check, the verifier may record an all-inclusive agreement with the original examiner versus recording verifying information for each print individually.
 - The name(s) or unique number(s) (e.g., Universal Control Number(s)) of the individual(s) compared. For ten print verifications of submitted records, the item number of the submitted record(s) will be used.
 - The notation that it is a verification.
 - Signature of verifier and date or date range of verification.
- Indication in the FBI Laboratory file of which known exemplar(s) was provided for examination.
 - Examples of this include transfer of the original item(s) on the chain of custody or secure initialing of a digital or physical copy of the exemplars.
- E. Once verification is completed:
 - The verifier returns the completed verification materials to the coordinator.
 - The coordinator will:
 - Review the conclusion(s) reached by the verifier.
 - Ensure all applicable records are returned to the primary examiner.
- F. If there is no disagreement, the following is recorded in the case notes:
 - The conclusion(s) reached.
 - Indication of which prints were verified.
 - Identity of the verifier.

5 BLIND VERIFICATION

- A. The primary examiner will provide:
 - The examiner's evaluation(s).
 - Unmarked images(s) of the print(s) to be blind verified.
 - Any other unmarked image(s) relied upon to arrive at the examiner's Analysis, Comparison, and Evaluation conclusion(s) (e.g., image(s) of the same print developed in a different development medium).
 - All associated known exemplar(s) used by the primary examiner to support the examiner's evaluation conclusion.
- B. The coordinator selects the blind verifier and ensures the applicable blind verification materials are provided.
 1. The appropriate Unit Chief ensures that blind verifiers are chosen on a rotational basis.
 2. The coordinator must avoid providing a known exemplar(s) that may bias the blind verifier's examinations (e.g., only providing multiple recordings of the left index finger and no other known exemplar may bias the blind verifier to compare the left index finger).
 3. The coordinator may be asked to provide additional information concerning the print (such as evidence type) or coordinate the transfer of a digital image(s).
- C. The blind verifier receives the blind verification materials and:

- Ensures that he/she is eligible to perform a blind verification as described in [Section 2](#).
 - Conducts and records an Analysis, Comparison, and Evaluation examination of the print(s) submitted for blind verification following the procedures in the [FRD-500](#).
 - May search the Next Generation Identification System.
 - If an Identification is not effected as a result of an automated search, the examiner's final decision must be based on manual comparison(s) with the provided record(s).
 - May request a digital copy of the original and/or digitally processed image(s) from the coordinator.
 - May request to consult with another examiner.
 - The coordinator will identify examiners with no prior knowledge of the conclusion(s).
 - This consultation must be recorded in the FBI Laboratory file.
- D. The blind verifier records the following:
- All appropriate markings on the provided unmarked image(s) of the blind verified print(s) to include:
 - The information used to reach the conclusion(s) as described in [FRD-500](#).
 - The analysis and evaluation conclusion(s) reached.
 - If the print(s) is deemed not suitable for comparison, the blind verifier must record that a blind verification was completed and the conclusion(s) reached was not suitable for comparison.
 - The name(s) or unique number(s) (e.g., Universal Control Number(s)) of the individual(s) compared.
 - The notation that it is a blind verification.
 - Signature of the blind verifier and date or date range of blind verification.
 - Indication in the FBI Laboratory file of which known exemplar(s) was provided.
 - Examples of this include transfer of the original item(s) on the chain of custody or initialing a digital or physical copy of the exemplars.
- E. Once blind verification is completed:
- The blind verifier returns the completed blind verification materials to the coordinator.
 - The blind verifier must await notification from the coordinator prior to any discussions about the print(s).
 - The coordinator reviews the conclusion(s) reached by the blind verifier and ensures all records are returned to the primary examiner.
- F. If there is no disagreement, the quality step is met and the following is recorded in the case notes:
- The conclusion(s) reached.
 - Indication of which prints were blind verified.

- Identity of the blind verifier.

6 SINGLE EXCLUSION/INCONCLUSIVE DECISIONS WITH MULTIPLE INDIVIDUALS

- In instances where a single exclusion decision will be reported with multiple individuals, the blind verification will be performed with one or more of the known individuals.
- In instances where a single inconclusive decision will be reported with multiple individuals, the blind verification will be performed with one or more of the known individuals.
- The number of individuals will be at the discretion of the coordinator and based on data such as case information or a discussion with the primary examiner.

7 HUMAN REMAINS, INTENTIONALLY RECORDED PRINTS, NEXT GENERATION IDENTIFICATION SYSTEM COMPARISONS, LATENT TO LATENT COMPARISONS, AND IDENTIFICATIONS ACROSS CASES

Blind verification is not required, but may be performed on single conclusions in the following scenarios as dictated by the needs of the examination or case:

- Unknown deceased.
- Standard or Non-standard Intentionally recorded prints.
- Next Generation Identification System comparisons, including Unsolved Latent Match cascade examinations (exclusions and inconclusive decisions only).
- Reported latent to latent identification(s) require only verification.
 - All other conclusions of latent to latent comparisons are not verified or blind verified.
- Any identification where the identified individual has been previously identified and verified in a connected incident, case, or submission.
 - If a blind verification is not done, a verification of the new identification is required.
 - *Example: Individual A is identified in a case record, the print is successfully blind verified, and the identification is reported. The individual is identified in a new submission in a case which has been linked to the original case record. A single identification for individual A in the second case will be verified, but a blind verification is not required. However, a blind verification may be done at the request of the examiner or the discretion of the supervisor.*

8 UNKNOWN BIOMETRIC IDENTITY TRACKER

- The Unknown Biometric Identity Tracker is used to collect information about latent to latent identifications that are made between incidents as a result of an automated search in the Unsolved Latent File.
- All latent to latent associations were verified when originally effected.
- At times, a collection of associated latent to latent prints recorded in the Tracker is identified with a known individual.
- The required quality check for these associations will be one of the following options:

- A blind verification between the known record and a single latent print in the collection OR
- A verification between the known record and two latent prints in the collection, provided the two latent prints came from two different incident numbers.
- E. Once the quality check requirement has been reached, no additional verifications or blind verifications are required.
- F. If there is a difference of conclusion (either analysis or evaluation), see [Section 9](#).

9 DISAGREEMENT RESOLUTION

If differences in conclusions (which include print type, suitable for comparison, or any evaluation decision) are apparent after verification or blind verification, the primary examiner and the verifier or blind verifier, as applicable, will reference the *FBI Laboratory Operations Manual* ([LAB-200](#)), the *Disagreements and Scientific Review Boards in Technical Casework* ([FRD-502](#)), as well as Sections below to resolve these differences.

9.1 Disagreement on Type of Print Claimed

- A. If examiners disagree on the type of print claimed (fingerprint, palm print, or impression) but the evaluation decisions agree, discussion is needed between the examiners to obtain a single analysis decision.
- B. All appropriate comparisons must be completed for the final decision of type of print.
- C. For blind verifications, any additional comparison(s) conducted will be treated as an additional verification or examination and the original conclusion will remain a blind verification.

9.2 Differences That Do Not Require Resolution

- A. If a verifier or blind verifier does not deem a print to be suitable for comparison, he/she will not be in disagreement with a conclusion of latent inconclusive and no resolution will occur.
 - 1. The print will be reported as latent inconclusive.
- B. Blind verifications conducted in Next Generation Identification System resulting in differing “no identification” conclusions (e.g., inconclusive vs. exclusion) are not considered to be in disagreement and will be reported as no identification effected.

9.3 Blind Verification Disagreements

- A. If a blind verification undergoes disagreement resolution and the blind verifier’s original evaluation conclusion changes, the comparison will change from a blind verification to a verification and be recorded as such.
- B. If, after disagreement resolution, the blind verifier changes their original conclusion to identification, an additional blind verification is required, unless a Scientific Review Board was used.
 - 1. All other disagreement resolutions do not require an additional blind verification.

- C. After two unsuccessful blind verification attempts, the final quality measure will be a Scientific Review Board as described in the [FRD-502](#).
1. All discussions and determinations will be recorded in the FBI Laboratory file.

10 REVISION HISTORY

Revision	Issued	Changes
08	02/22/2022	Updated format and document references and reorganized sections. Term “Facilitator” changed to “Coordinator”. Term “Consensus Panel” changed to “Scientific Review Board”. Section 2.2 B – Added exception after verification. Section 4 D – Clarified what known exemplars needed indications of receipt. Section 6 A and Section 6 B – statement split to clarify situation is not “Either/or”. Section 9 – added clarification of scope.
09	10/17/2022	Section 4-C and Section 5-C – added search allowance. Section 7 – Added exception for prints identified across cases.